

**Robert J. Grey, Jr.**  
President

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Honorable Arlen Specter  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Specter:

I am writing on behalf of the American Bar Association to commend you and Senators Joseph Biden and Orrin Hatch for your strong leadership in introducing the Violence Against Women Act of (VAWA) of 2005, S.1197. The ABA, representing over 400,000 lawyers and law students nationwide, including a broad cross-section of family lawyers, advocates for victims of domestic violence, prosecuting attorneys and judges, strongly supports your effort to reauthorize and strengthen VAWA before the Act expires in September, and we consider it vitally important that your reauthorization bill quickly pass the Senate before the expiration date.

The programs created under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 have made a difference in the lives of millions of women, aiding in the prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse cases, increasing services for victims and resources for law enforcement personnel, and creating a National Domestic Violence Hotline. Programs requiring reauthorization include STOP grants, Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies, funding for battered women's shelters and rape prevention programs, and funding for civil legal representation. VAWA reauthorization legislation will enable these crucial programs to continue for another five years at levels essential to service providers and law enforcement personnel.

VAWA programs and policies have led to profound improvements in the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence and sexual assaults. For instance, in the past decade over a million battered women have found justice in our courtrooms and obtained protection orders, and over 300 courts have some specialized docket processes to better address the distinct nature of domestic violence cases. More than 660 new state laws on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking have been passed.

We must not let this successful program languish, as there is much more that must be done to combat the violence. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, on average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country every day. More than 2.5 million women are victims of violence each year, and nearly one in every three women experiences at least one physical assault by a partner during adulthood. Reports also indicate that up to ten million children experience domestic violence in their homes each year. We

believe your comprehensive bill strikes the appropriate balance between renewing core programs, stiffening criminal penalties, closing loopholes and creating needed new initiatives for children and prevention efforts. We are particularly pleased that your bill would increase funding for the Civil Legal Assistance and STOP grant programs.

Lawyers witness every day families ravaged by domestic violence and sexual assault in our nation's courtrooms. Your bill continues the powerful legacy of the Violence Against Women Act to help those families in need. We look forward to working with you for a speedy Senate passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert J. Grey, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert J. Grey, Jr.  
Richmond, Virginia